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ABSTRACT

This second annual commemoration of the chartering of the North Suburban Library System (NSLS) consists of a speech entitled: "The Suburban System in Metropolitan Library Networks," given by Lowell A. Martin, Professor, School of Library Science, Columbia University and the "Reaction to Dr. Martin's Speech" is by H. G. Johnston. The questions asked and answers given are also included. The NSLS has published and distributed this record of the substance of NSLS Day, 1969, in the belief that it will stimulate a reconsideration of the problems and the promises identified in the program, and will provide an indication of the substance of the commemoration for those who were unable to attend. (Author/NH)

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Proceedings . . . .

2nd ANNUAL
NSLS DAY

September 18, 1969

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North Suburban Library System
5814 Dempster Street
Morton Grove, Illinois 60053

1970

NSLS DAY, 1969

NSLS Day, 1969, the second annual commemoration of the chartering of the North Suburban Library System, was marked by a statistically significant attendance, a thought provoking paper, a stimulating reaction, and an abundance of audience questions. Any one of these evidences may be taken as an indication of the success of the celebration.

Recognizing that this success was the result of contributions by many, I thank the members of the Executive Committee of the Regional Library Advisory Council; the directors, librarians, and staffs of the Waukegan and Gail Borden Public Libraries; Paul Gorby, the System's President; Peter Bury, then Chairman of the Executive Committee; the members of the NSLS staff; Dick Johnston; Dr. Lowell Martin; and the several hundred members and guests of the NSLS family who attended the celebration.

Again, the NSLS is publishing and distributing this record of the substance of NSLS Day, 1969, in the belief that it will stimulate a reconsideration of the problems and the promises identified in the program, and will provide an indication of the substance of the commemoration for those who were unable to attend.

Robert R. McClarren
System Director
North Suburban Library System
June 30, 1970

THE SUBURBAN SYSTEM IN METROPOLITAN LIBRARY NETWORKS

by

Lowell A. Martin

Professor, School of Library Science

Columbia University

I welcome this opportunity to talk with those responsible for one of the newest and most favored and potentially most challenging metropolitan library systems in the country--the North Suburban Library System.

Why "most favored" and "potentially most challenging"? Together you represent close to one million people with an average income well above national norms. Your average educational level of adults has moved up to 14 years as compared with 10 years in Chicago and 11 in the country as a whole. You support your 28 libraries at an average of more than $5.00 per capita.

As one quick indicator, consider these comparisons with your big-city neighbor, Chicago. You have financial support for library service twice the per-capita rate in the city -- your professional librarians serve on the average 8,000 people, while the professional in Chicago seeks to serve 15,448 people -- when it comes to books circulated, the libraries within NSLS show an average of 8.1 per year compared with Chicago's 3.2 -- and on portion of population registered, you have 50.1 percent of your people on the library rolls whereas Chicago has 20.4 percent. One might say that you are where many other libraries hope they can get.

When it comes to NSLS itself, you rest on one of the better-designed pieces of state legislation in the country, and the state financial support for the system is enough to get started although in my opinion not enough to keep going at full potential. And perhaps you are most favored of all in that your program is relatively new. All your commitments are not made; options remain open; you are not burdened with an established bureaucracy.

Let me make the same point of your special and unique situation against an historical background, by means of a quick look back at the origins of the library systems concept. The idea goes back at least to The National Plan for Public Library Service set forth by Carleton Joeckel in 1946. He proposed that the 7,500 separate and mostly small public libraries in the country be reorganized into some 1,000 either consolidated or federated systems -- the reorganization to occur not from the top down by national or state fiat but by a banding together of local libraries into natural alliances. In practice it proved necessary to provide a considerable measure of state initiative and state money before much happened, but the concept has caught on and become the moving force in

library development. The basic argument offered by Joeckel and others for fashioning library systems was the self-evident weakness of most small and separate libraries. Even as the one-room school could not meet the needs of a complex and technological society for the education of young people, so a comparable library could not supply the need for the expanding record of information and knowledge.

The implied model for the federated library system composed of various small libraries working together was the unified big-city library. Indeed a moving force behind the movement was the conscious desire to erase a double standard in library service, as between the urban centers on the one hand and the rural and small town hinterland on the other. The city libraries had large central collections on which branches could draw, they had central catalogs of resources, and specialized staff members at headquarters who could inspire and guide local personnel, and inter-agency loan systems, and centralized processing and cataloging. Jointly the member libraries of a federated system would build a similar coordinating structure.

I remind you of this genesis of the public-library systems movement only to make an obvious point about NSLS. You do not fit neatly into the historical pattern. The base of NSLS is not a series of small, weak and scattered libraries; on the contrary, 21 of the 28 system members had incomes last year near or above $100,000, the desirable minimum customarily cited. Moreover, I trust that your goal is not fully stated by saying that you want to become like a big-city unified system.

What Should a Suburban Library System Be?

The program of NSLS is currently coming into shape. Most of what the organization will do in these next years is being determined by foundations now being laid and commitments now being made. Evidently plans have been built with care and reflect the collective judgment of both professionals and lay people in the area. Where necessary, facts have been gathered and studies made to analyze situations. An element of economy, of stretching the dollar, runs through the story. At least these are the impressions an outsider gets in looking through the reports of NSLS and noting its various projects.

The elements of what I have called the standard big-city pattern are there. Let me run through them again, and along the way raise a few questions about just how they apply to the particular north suburban library environment.

Some initial steps have been taken to build stronger central resources, by adding to the collection of the Evanston Public Library and devising a plan of cooperative subject acquisition. This raises the question of just what the proper scope and depth should be of one or more central collections in NSLS, given its location within the fourth

largest library concentration in the United States. How far should you use your money to build your own resources, particularly of lesser-used items, as compared with seeking greater access to the existing holdings of the metropolitan region, even if this access must be paid for on some per-use basis?

You are also moving toward a system reference center and system-wide reference service. We were struck, in noting the shortcomings in reference capacity of The Chicago Public Library, with the lack of a strong central point for reference inquiry on the part of the general public in the whole Chicago area, comparable to the role played by the Cleveland Public Library for northern Ohio or of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore for the whole state of Maryland. When we asked a cross-section of Chicago residents where they would turn first for information, the largest single response was to call the Chicago Tribune! Here again a nice question arises of how far NSLS should seek to go. The survey report on The Chicago Public Library strongly recommends a reference and bibliographic center in that library more powerful than any existing installation in the country, and further recommends that this be a metropolitan and not just a city resource.

As another element in joint advancement, you have installed an inter-library loan program. No one can fault you on this, for it is a way of sharing your own resources and of handling demand up to a certain level, which in turn will permit the Illinois research and reference program to function at the advanced and specialized level for which it was intended. Yet even here there is an internal variable, the possibility that you will develop reciprocal borrowing among your members. This could cut down on an elaborate inter-library loan program, for the simple reason that if readers can themselves borrow books from other sources, some are disposed to go directly rather than to wait several days.

On the matter of specialized staff hired by the system, to advise and guide and train workers in local libraries, you also have a situation different from a small town and rural setting. There already is a goodly complement of professional staff in your member libraries; as one straw in the wind, we were interested to note in the course of the Chicago study that there are more members of the area chapter of the Special Libraries Association from north shore suburban libraries than from the whole of CPL. The question here is just what expertise and special talents should be brought in on the system roles when the participating units of the system already have trained and experienced personnel, in some cases with leadership capacity of the kind one usually aspires to add by means of a systems organization.

Parenthetically I want for a moment to drop back to the ratio between professional librarians and population served that I mentioned at the outset. You may recall the figure of one professional to each 8,000 people that prevails in the NSLS district. I said that the ratio is much better than in Chicago. But the figure surprised me because it shows a smaller provision of professional staff than I would have guessed from the general nature of the area and from the amount of money you have

for library service. Your 1 to 8,000 ratio is well short of the national standards of the American Library Association. To give you a few more outside comparisons, Boston provides one professional librarian to 4,638 people, Baltimore 1 to 4,810, Cleveland 1 to 4,892, even Saint Louis 1 to 5,653 and Detroit 1 to 6,073. For all your advantages in the north suburban region, the typical professional librarian in your district is trying to serve almost twice as many people as in the stronger libraries in the country.

I won't run down through all the systems services you are developing, but let me mention just one more to reinforce my point that your circumstances are special by virtue of the local strength with which you start and by virtue of your location in one of the major metropolitan centers of the country. I refer to centralized processing and cataloging, which I understand is developing on an inter-system basis and has grown to what might be called an intermediate volume. Did you know that what cost studies we have -- such as the Nelson study in New York State -- suggest that a few libraries processing and cataloging together can realize moderate unit-cost savings, and a large combine of libraries handling a million or more books annually can realize substantial savings, but groups of intermediate size may not achieve much clear advantage? Looking ahead only a few years, and based not on theory but on current experiments, one can foresee a major computerized processing outlet in a metropolitan region such as Chicago, drawing to a considerable extent on machine-readable MARC tapes prepared at the Library of Congress, and automatically producing either catalog cards or book catalogs for libraries in the area. The breakthrough in cataloging for suburban libraries may not be so much on a systems as on a metropolitan basis.

I have belabored the point enough. Your conditions are different; the North Suburban Library System starts from a degree of strength rather than from weakness. The basic question therefore arises of whether your system's program, rather than being traditional, should strike out for a fresh and higher conception of public library service.

Interestingly enough, there is one traditional system achievement which would seem to apply particularly to the suburban condition, but on which you have as yet made little progress. I refer to reciprocal borrowing by readers among member libraries. In all the coordinated projects we struggle to devise among members of library systems, hoping to improve services or cut costs, none comes as close to the user as simple removal of the corporate boundaries acting as barriers to library use. This applies in particular to a concentrated suburban area, where people live in one jurisdiction, work in another, shop in a third, and pass through several almost every day. I know full well the constraints which work against removal of the walls, particularly the concern of some localities that they will end up carrying a disproportionate part of the burden. But this is not hard to count, and then if necessary compensate if there is an unbalance. The money spent would buy more tangible return than if invested in projects from which the gains are hypothetical. You have a particularly advantageous situation because the biggest library in the metropolitan area, the one that would be expected to be last to pull down the barriers, has on its own opened full use, including circulation

use, to suburban residents. The Chicago Public Library has no less than 70,000 registered suburban borrowers, but I don't know how long this one-sided privilege can be maintained without reciprocation. Reciprocal borrowing privileges -- or more directly one common card for the area -- is one of the tests as to whether a group of libraries really means business in working together. The visitor can only wish you well, and full speed ahead, in the initial demonstration along this line that you intend to initiate later this year.

I have stressed the point that your opportunity is to build for the 1970's, and that the means for this purpose may not be the system's structure of the 1960's. If I were smart I would stop with that generalization and move on to metropolitan library networks, but having come this far it seems to me that I should at least try to indicate alternative directions. To do so I will have to back away a bit, in an effort to characterize the present mold of public library service.

In general the public library serves primarily three groups in the population. The first is younger children as they enter and explore the world of picture and print. The second is young people in high school as they seek material in connection with their schooling. The third is the out-of-school adult who has built reading into his life style and elects not to subscribe to or buy all he wants to read. I of course know that others also turn to the public library -- the person seeking factual information, for example, but repeated studies have shown that the institution is not thought of as an information source by the general populace.

You may be curious as to what portion of each of these broad groups is reached by The Chicago Public Library. Forty-two percent of the children respond, 58 percent of the young adults in school, and 12 percent of the out-of-school adults. Figures for the north suburban libraries would be higher.

Running back over these three groups we can look a little further into their library use. As to the young children, they increasingly have another publicly-supported source for reading and related materials, the school library. There are from five to six times as many school as there are public library units, and all the children -- not just those who use the public library but also those who do not -- get within immediate reach of the school library every school day. The implications for children's use of public libraries are not just theoretical. In Chicago the per-child book circulation from the public library was 13.1 in 1960; by 1968 it was 7.3. This is not necessarily direct cause-and-effect, but the evidence calls for a review of policy.

I doubt whether the same decline can be predicted for public-library use by high-school and college students. The public library has a strong combination going for it at this level: high-school students need materials available only in the public library, and they like to go to the community agency, or at least like to go if enough of their friends are there. But even here we do not know the portion of the

total school book and media needs that will be met as super-school libraries emerge, in new educational clusters. At this level some concentrated and realistic joint planning as between public library and school library is long overdue, and might well start in the suburbs.

It is to the adult out-of-school library user that I would like to direct your attention for just a few minutes. He is a minority of the population even in the suburbs. For the most part he uses the library for a middle range of materials -- some diversional fiction, the more popular non-fiction of the day, travel and history and popular psychology to an extent, and non-specialized subject publications. No disparagement of this reading is intended. By and large the individuals involved are the more alert and sophisticated members of the community. The point is that they consume non-specialized middle-range publications, and our public libraries serve them.

What is outside the middle range? On one one side are advanced and specialized materials in book and journal and report form. These are not so much the resources of the relaxing worker or the curious observer but the record and tools of a highly complex industrial, commercial and technological order. Do those who use this specialized record have anything to do with the suburbs? I need hardly respond that most live in the suburbs. Some have full access to the technical record through special libraries or associations with universities, but many are not so affiliated. One of the questions before the American public library -- and before NSLS -- is whether and how it can serve at this advanced level. Your program thus far is designed more to do better by the existing middle range and very little to reach up to serve the specialized society that America is becoming.

Or shift your attention to a quite different sector outside the usual library fare. I refer to the disadvantaged, or underprivileged, or undereducated. City libraries are finding that the usual branches and the usual collections do not reach these people and help to bring them into the mainstream. But what would this have to do with suburban libraries? You will remember Ken Shaffer's presentation a year ago at these same meetings on impending changes in the suburbs. What a notable contribution if part of the strength of suburban libraries, and part of the potential of suburban library systems, could be turned to this cause. I doubt if the separate libraries can accomplish this alone. The prospect that opens here is the suburban library system not just applying long-standing city practices, but the system, working with selected members, planning, experimenting and leading the way for suburb and city alike.

You recognize my theme -- the suburban library system as a unique element in the library mix, not just catching up but leading the way. Let me give one more example.

The young people today tell us that institutions are irrelevant and professionals uncommitted. Those of you who were at the annual ALA convention in Atlantic City three months ago know that these voices are not limited to the campus. Many librarians resent the charge, because they know they are concerned and they know that they faithfully

seek to acquire material on all sides of issues as they arise and as their clientele expresses interests. I heard a librarian say in exasperation: "What do they want me to do -- throw away all the books that reflect traditional morality, duplicate the sex thrillers, and serve the public in the nude?"

We will be hearing more about "librarianship of advocacy". The term is not apt because it implies a taking of sides on issues. What is meant is selecting topics for emphasis, rather than waiting for the community to develop and voice an interest, and then featuring materials on the selected topics. We could all name issues: the Vietnam war, racial prejudice, the campus revolt, drugs, pollution, moral permissiveness, down this autumn to sex education in the schools. Every one of your libraries has something on these topics -- a few books on the shelves or out in use, magazine articles that can be located through the indexes, perhaps some pamphlets in the vertical-file drawers. Advocacy calls for beefing up resources on selected issues, duplicating substantially, getting reprints of articles, and then featuring this material by bringing the several forms together and locating them in prime use space, perhaps even with slide clips or continuous showing of films to introduce and dramatize the issues. No one knows just how this would work, or how it should most effectively be done. Once again enter the system, working with selected members, making an investment, conducting experiments, checking to see what is achieved -- and in the process cutting a new path.

I wish there was time to present other possibilities. The multi-media library is one that comes to mind. Libraries for the most part are book oriented, and other media tend to be appendages. I have seen a few multi-media school libraries and one or two college libraries in this category, but not a multi-media public library. Is it too fantastic to think of a suburban library system, working with and through selected members, probing for a new library service environment? But that is a subject for another meeting.

The public library movement at this time desperately needs centers of experimentation. We have built up traditions, and at least some of them must be maintained and improved -- almost every public library in the country is engaged in this. What is lacking is a new force for developing fresh programs and patterns. I am suggesting that suburban library systems, without extensive commitments to the past, with membership made up of some of the more effective public libraries in the country, should devote part of their time and energy and money to the purpose.

Prospect for a Metropolitan Library Network

This is enough gratuitous advice on the NSLS program. My comments may well be more useful if I now confine myself to the prospect of a metropolitan library network in the Chicago area, and particularly the

direction we have suggested for The Chicago Public Library. I will select those matters from the Chicago report which have a relation to NSLS.

The Chicago study was of necessity devoted primarily to the crisis within that library. No detailed field work was done on the metropolitan area, and no detailed plans are proposed for an area-wide network. Indeed such plans should be worked out jointly and not handed down unilaterally from the big city. Our recommendations were designed more to get CPL ready to participate in a metropolitan network.

At the outset certain attitudes are proposed on the part of CPL officials and staff. An outlook that is more than provincial and reaches beyond the municipal boundaries is to be developed, to be followed by active participation in meetings and projects that have inter-jurisdictional scope. I guess if there is any one blanket criticism that we could justifiably leval at CPL staff it would be isolation -- from the readers and groups they serve, from the subject areas in which they function, and from other libraries. At the same time the Chicago library officials are advised not to approach metropolitan library affairs with the attitude that because they represent the largest single library they therefore are doing the area a favor by cooperating. Looking into the next decade, the portion of the metropolitan population living outside the city will surpass that within the city, and with the shift in population will go a shift in resources and power. In the long pull the city library needs the suburban agencies as much as the suburban libraries need the city.

Here is a rather down-to-earth inter-library consideration that came to light in the course of the survey. We used as one device to get at actual service performance a panel of representative users -- "anonymous shoppers", if you will -- whom we sent into agencies of the library with specific questions. Among other shortcomings that turned up not just a few times but frequently was lack of knowledge on the part of the CPL staff of just what is in other libraries. An example would be referring a patron to the Newberry library for material on the recent history of Mexico, when Newberry has explicitly announced that it is no longer collecting Latin-American history after the colonial period. The thought that occurs to me is that staff members in NSLS libraries might do well to learn just what is and is not in the Chicago Public Library -- after all, it is your official research and reference center.

Major new programs in CPL, we insist, are to be planned in the future for metropolitan utilization where applicable. I have already mentioned the Information-Bibliographic Center, and the automated processing and cataloging department. Incidentally, we suggest that the latter be established not in the Loop and the crowded central building, but in a decentralized, assembly-line location. Similarly, the proposal for 10 regional library service centers within Chicago, replacing the present three regional branches, is worked out with an eye to eventual planning across corporate boundaries. It is interesting that the size of collections recommended for these intermediate centers, 200,000 volumes, is just about the size of the largest collection within NSLS.

Recommendations which at first may seem only internal could in time have direct implications for suburban system programs. We hit hard at building the central collection of The Chicago Public Library, which bluntly is not able today to serve at the research and specialized level. You will catch one measure of this limitation when I report that CPL currently subscribes to a total of 2,600 different magazines and journals; The Crerar Library gets 11,000 in the field of science alone. When the existing wide gap in library resources in the Chicago area is filled, the gap that results from the limited concept in the past of what the CPL collection should be, your inter-library loan system up through Evanston and then on to Chicago will have a much better batting average. Also, as printed book catalogs of the strengthened CPL collections are produced, think what an aid copies would be sitting in your libraries.

We do not propose a single super-coordinating library agency for the Chicago area, such as METRO in New York or MELSA in Minneapolis, although some such structure might evolve later. We do urge that the Chicago Public Library establish three parallel lines of consultation and planning -- with the research libraries, with the school libraries, and with the public-library systems of northern Illinois. To be sure that inter-library relations do not fall by the wayside, we propose a new high-level officer in the city library assigned solely to metropolitan library relations. Here is an exciting job for the most capable professional in the NSLS area not yet carrying major administrative responsibility -- age preferably under 40.

What is the prospect for an overall library network in the Chicago area? I guess the safest answer is that it will not happen tomorrow or the day after. Some of the Chicago-area units, starting with the city library and the city school libraries, first have a lot of internal housecleaning to do. The suburban systems are just getting on their feet. Then you will have to learn to cross type-of-library lines -- yours is still only a public-library system, not a library system period.

Thinking back to the Chicago library scene when I knew it, just after World War II, I wonder if there were more area-wide contacts at that time than there are now. There was once a metropolitan library council for the Chicago region, but it withered and died. In 1945 a directory of libraries of the Chicago area was produced, but it has not been revised. In the interval all libraries have been expending every ounce of energy right at home trying to keep up increased demands. But I think I see a new attitude -- perhaps it is no more than tardy disillusionment -- in which many libraries realize that they won't make it alone. Also, as another positive force, there are NSLS and the other recently-created systems. Unless you follow the path of turning in upon yourself, these systems may be the tonic, the elixir, needed to mobilize libraries in common cause -- that common cause being the reader and media user in all his cantankerous diversity.

When the survey staff in Chicago finished the job there, we sat back and searched in our minds for the key, central concepts that underlay the 500-page report. Two words seemed to catch the essence -- quality and innovation. Perhaps they apply also to NSLS. Not business as usual --

not libraries as they were -- but quality and innovation. These next few years could be exciting in library affairs in the Chicago area, if the North Suburban Library System and the other systems come anywhere near their potential.

REACTION TO DR. MARTIN'S SPEECH
BY H. G. JOHNSTON

Mr. Johnston:

I want to emphasize four items specifically regarding Dr. Martin's talk, and in doing so to direct the thinking toward a total metropolitan system. Dr. Martin spoke about involving both professional and lay people in the planning for your system. In planning for a total metropolitan library system, this is equally important. Many people from every existing system which has a part in total metropolitan library service should be involved. How much money should the suburban system put into special collections, when you have near at hand the Chicago Public Library's collection, which will continue to grow and be more important? Can you justify the expense of building certain specialized collections, or should you right now begin to think about how the CPL's collection can be utilized? Perhaps you are thinking about it. Perhaps you are utilizing it. But perhaps more can be done in anticipation of the expected growth in the suburbs. The recommendation is that the Chicago Public Library be "beefed-up" to create a metropolitan bibliographic center. This should be done so that more and more of the collection can be used by your library users.

The reciprocal borrowing which you are developing, could affect the interlibrary loan program you are operating. How many are going to be involved in your proposed reciprocal borrowing program? Will it cross system lines? Will it be available to Chicago residents? Are you looking forward to a common borrowers card for the whole area? Are you thinking about a library card that can be used anywhere in the state? In Michigan we once had a Governor who mentioned a state-wide card. It was his first term, and he wasn't re-elected. I don't know whether it was the librarians, the trustees or just who was responsible for his defeat. Anyway, the idea wasn't accepted in Michigan. Maybe this is the state for the state-wide card, and maybe it can be started with a common borrowing card involving the systems and the Chicago Public Library.

The concept of building your services on the specialized staff you already have available, of adding more specialized staff, or utilizing the Chicago Public Library's specialized staff, and of seeing that CPL gets more specialized staff is most important. In my work with the Detroit Metropolitan Library Project, I wondered more about what we could do in the more distant future than in the 1970's. I'm sure all of you are thinking in the same way, because the suburbs are going to be changing. Your area is growing very rapidly -- doubling, tripling, quadrupling, in perhaps ten years -- and you must be planning for it.

Dr. Martin also mentioned the need for more school library and public library cooperation, and called particular attention to the emergence of super-school libraries as a part of educational clusters. With the great library needs of school students, public libraries, also have a great deal to do. If we're to spend our money wisely, if we're to stretch the dollar, more planning with the schools is in order. We have a responsibility for students; they're a part of our public.

Very important was Dr. Martin's reference to suburbia's possible role in serving the disadvantaged, the uneducated. This aspect of our work we must not overlook. We must consider the walls that are built up in our own communities. If we can direct all of the power of the educational leadership in our community toward this problem, we will have gone a long way toward solving the total metropolitan library service problem. Suburbia could lead the way for the city and suburbs alike.

The summary of the Chicago Public Library study recommends that the Director of the Chicago Public Library take the lead in the planning and the calling together groups to start thinking about and to develop library service. If the Chicago Public Library doesn't have time to accept the leadership in moving toward the total metropolitan library service, then the NSLS and other system directors should take the necessary steps.

Dr. Martin makes a statement on the need in the public library movement for providing centers of experimentation and evaluation. Perhaps the suburban system can be the force for developing new programs which will help to solve many of the problems affecting the areas in which suburbanites either work, live, live near, read about, or are associated with in other ways. Plans for such experimentation should be worked out jointly for metropolitan library services.

A sensitive area that Dr. Martin touched on briefly was the possible isolation of suburban librarians as well as those in the Chicago Public Library. I don't know about those in the NSLS but it is a problem in most metropolitan areas and one we must correct.

In thinking about the 10 regional library centers of the Chicago Public Library recommended for establishment by Dr. Martin in his study, I wonder whether or not the same need applies to the suburban area as well. Can these proposed centers reach across the boundaries from Chicago into suburbia? Can a planned approach for library centers throughout the whole suburban area be made? Perhaps we should plan for many different kinds of centers and not just those located in areas now contemplated.

More money will be needed. There needs to be a constant search for the financing of these plans. I think it's wonderful what Illinois has done in providing money for systems. I just wish that Michigan could have developed the same kind of formula and had the same kind of success. You may believe you do not have enough money, but believe me, it's always important for the rest of us to look up to you, to point our legislatures toward you, and to say, "All right, do as Illinois and New York do. Give us some money."

The prospect of a metropolitan library service may not be for tomorrow, nor the day after. I'm not sure how many "days after" it'll be, but it'll be more than one. There's so much planning to do. Whether it's the 20th or the 21st century in the Chicago area before metropolitan service is realized, the systems should be the tonic to mobilize the resources for this common goal. You have such a good beginning here, and I hope that you don't lose the impetus. I hope you keep the magic formula for getting money, and that you apply it to a total area development of library service.

The two key words that Dr. Martin mentioned, are "quality" and "innovation". We all need to use these over and over again within our individual libraries, within our systems, and within a concept of total metropolitan service.

Question Period*

Question: The Chicago Public Library has a policy of providing a library card to any person with an address in the metropolitan area without a charge. How much is this privilege used by residents of say, Wilmette?

Dr. Martin: Just over 70,000 non-Chicago residents are on the rolls of the Chicago Public Library. We did break it down to individual communities, but I could not hope to pull the Wilmette figures out of memory. It's likely to be something in the range of 500-600. To me it's very interesting that the largest library in your area, the Chicago Public Library, the library which might be expected to be last to enter reciprocal borrowing arrangements, actually has taken a large step in that direction by removing the barrier to borrowing by outsiders. But I want to add a word of caution; I truly do not know how long that arrangement can be maintained without reciprocation on your part.

Question: How are we going to hear, are we hearing the voices of the young members of the staff of the Chicago Public Library?

Dr. Martin: From our study, I see no evidence that young voices are really being heard. Within the library we found considerable dissatisfaction on the part of young professionals feeling that they were not heard. This was evident in exit interviews with younger members resigning after a year or two on the job. How to accomplish this? We strongly urge that younger members be appointed to the library board. Staff members in their twenties should be on all planning committees -- in fact might constitute the bulk of certain committees, say that planning young adult service.

Question: What is the attitude of Mayor Daley toward involving the young in library planning?

Dr. Martin: I cannot speak for the Mayor of Chicago. What I can say, speaking personally, is that younger members should be brought more into the planning of library services, and that all of us in administrative positions have not done as much as we should in this regard. Here is a good topic to have on the agenda of NSLS.

Question: I got the feeling as you were talking that the Chicago Public Library is in such straights that just to achieve a minimum standard of quality could take years rather than days. Perhaps the program for the systems and in particular for the individual libraries in this system, would be to develop their own specialized libraries and library collections. Is this a possibility which we should consider seriously?

Dr. Martin: Well, the Chicago Public Library has all the problems in the book and many that are not in the book. It's a question whether an institution of that kind will get moving or not. I think it will get

* A composite record of the question periods at the Waukegan Public Library and at the Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin.

moving. I think the leadership in the board is evident. I see important stirrings within the Library, within the staff. Since the survey, there's been legislation which opens up the prospect of substantial financial improvement in that library. Now, you people face a dilemma, and I'm sure I don't know the answer to it. You are building a suburban library system around a very big city. I say it's a dilemma because the big city library is not strong at the present time. However, I think you would be better advised not to try to build deep and extensive research collections on your own. I think some of these collections already exist in Chicago, not solely in the Chicago Public Library, but in other libraries as well. I think the Chicago Public Library will move forward in strengthening its resources, and even if it doesn't, you are not going to be able to build a collection of materials at the research level for the next ten or twenty years. I would, if I were in your position, aid and abet in every possible way the development of that library. I would not try in any way to duplicate its resources or those of the other specialized libraries in the city. I would seek to take steps to get the fullest access to what is there.

Mr. Johnston: I second those suggestions also. Many different kinds of libraries should be involved in the total planning and in making resources available. We need to do this in our area, and it seems to make sense to do the same thing here.

Dr. Martin: It's worth adding that unless steps are taken, all special resources --- not only those of the CPL but others --- will get harder for your people to use. The Crerar Library has moved from its central location and is less convenient. The Newberry Library has various restrictions on use. The very strong art and architecture collections in the Chicago Art Institute recently have been restricted to use by members. There are resources in Chicago libraries that are very important to your suburban people. I don't think the answer is to have all those libraries give you service out of their limited funds. What is needed is negotiation to find the right way, including the putting up of money on your part, if necessary, to get access to those resources. And of course you have the state regional center plan, based for your area on the Chicago Public Library, already started and on which you should build.

Question: Reference has been made several times to the total resources of the Chicago area. I think that if they were known they would be tremendous; they would surprise all but the librarians who have done some studying of them. A list of what is available and circumstances under which the information is or is not available would be very helpful. Wouldn't the development of such a directory be a place to start?

Dr. Martin: I certainly agree with that. Where metropolitan-wide library planning groups have been set up (Metro in New York, for example), almost invariably, the first project is "Let's find out what we've got." It proves to be quite a complicated thing to work out, but it is a necessary first step.

Comment: I'm impressed by your statistics that only 12%, I think you said, of the adults in Chicago have contact with the public library. As a lawyer, for example, I wouldn't consider going to a public library for a book of law. Yet it seems to me there is an emormous depth of

legal material in public libraries, if somehow I had some assurance when I walked into a public library that I could get at it. To me, this points up the neglect, so to speak, of the vocational use of the library. There would seem to be a necessity for a union catalog, for a retrieval system. We have resources but we don't have access to them. One of the impressive things about the work that the North Suburban Library System is doing is that it's not piling up books in the back room. Instead, it's stimulating use of existing materials in various libraries through interlibrary communication. But to really use the potential we need libraries in the area. If I can walk into my library and have access to a facility that will tell me where the books I want are, then I will start as an adult to use the public library. Until I can have this access, I'll go there expecting a copy of Portnoy's Complaint, but I won't go there expecting to get any serious help in the legal field. This to me is the crux, then: access, intercommunication, the library as a focal point for access to the information explosion rather than a builder of a collection of lawbooks in the back room. A system is needed which permits a lawyer to go to his local library and find out there where he can then go, without fumbling all over the Chicago metropolitan area, using the card catalogs in each individual library.

Leader (to Dr. Martin and Mr. Johnston): You don't want to argue that, do you?

Dr. Martin and Mr. Johnston: Amen. Amen.

Question: I was interested in your comparison of the figures of professional librarians in the System libraries to the total population, and it occurs to me that perhaps the figures should be different for other suburban communities. A different ratio of semi-professionals, for example, might make a difference. What are your comments on this?

Dr. Martin: There are many variables in this question of staff ratio. Whether these variables would show that the North Suburban area can get away with one professional per 8,000 population while Baltimore, for example, has and needs one per 4,700, I truly do not know. I'm skeptical about this. While you could argue that your people are more educated, and therefore need less professional guidance and help, my experience is that there's something in educational reading that grows on itself. The more education you have, the more reading you have, the more the librarian's function is called into play. I still suspect an area like the North Suburban one needs quite a bit of strength in its professional and para-professional staff.

Question: Could you comment on how we, working in and for public libraries, supposedly serving the public, are going to get more people to come to the library and use the maximum service we're talking about?

Dr. Martin: I'll not answer this question by talking about a public relations or publicity campaign. I'm not against publicity for libraries, but I just don't get excited about beating the bushes for people to "please come and use my library". What we must do is to make our services more significant to people. One example will suffice. The people of the North Suburban area need and are seeking information of all kinds, yet your libraries are not really serving as information centers. If they did, you would have far more than 12 or 15 percent of the out-of-school adults coming through your doors.

Question: In your references to children's services, you commented about the decreasing use of the public library by children, and the increase in school libraries, and we read accounts in the professional literature on what's happening in New York and the plan to dissolve the public library services for children in that area. Philosophically, what's in this for us librarians, and practically, should our children's librarians start job hunting?

Dr. Martin: In the long range, I am convinced that the schools of the country will vastly expand their library resources. These resources will be increasingly used, as they should be, by the children, and these resources will not be solely limited to textbook and near-textbook materials. Indeed, the school libraries, mark you, have gone forward to multi-media standards before public libraries have gone forward. In the long run, the children increasingly will find their resources in the schools. In the short range, Chicago school libraries are not up to standard. They are not moving as rapidly as they should. The Chicago children are in the streets tonight, and we therefore recommend a great improvement in the children's service in the Chicago Public Library in the next 10 years, with a major review of the relations to the schools in 1980.

Question: Do you think the build-up of the school library is the result of an immediate effort of school librarians to be creative and original, or is it the result of a massive funding not available to the public librarians?

Dr. Martin: Both factors play a part. A fresh sense of resources and media has come into school library service. And, at about the same time, federal funds to help achieve the fresh objectives.

Question: Does Dr. Martin have any rule of thumb that would suggest what level of support we should have to initiate the innovations he suggests?

Dr. Martin: I don't have a rule of thumb or figure. I know the state law in Illinois. I know the per capita and the per square mile figures which provide the financial basis on which you're working at the present time. My guess is that two years from today you will find that to carry out, at a quality level, those programs that you now have and that you are committing yourself to, will use every penny of that money. There will be much left to be done including the innovative work. I don't know how much this should be, but I don't think you have enough under the Illinois plan at present.

Question: Dr. Martin mentioned experimentation and innovation in system services and programs. Would he give us some examples of his ideas?

Dr. Martin: I tried to give a few examples in my talk: selecting and publicizing materials on current issues was one, and service to the disadvantaged was another. One which I omitted is the multi-media library, and I don't mean by this solely a film service as an appendage. Most public libraries go into what they call audio-visual service and films as an appendage. The multi-media library should be a new library environment, a library integrating all the various media in one collection. Also there are the vast possibilities of information service.

Now let me make one point clear. I am not thinking of Bob McClarren and a couple of his staff people dreaming up some bright idea, setting up shop on their own, trying the bright idea in a vacuum, and then pointing to it and saying "Why don't you people do it that way?" My thought is to work with volunteer members within the System on practical experiments. Some of these experiments would fail. Others would show progress, and additional libraries might be interested in them.

Question: My area seems to have a very large young population which has not been spoken to. I was interested in your comment about the"cost of business"in an approach like this for the young. I have had the experience in getting out a little publicity on the fact that I have a few rock records, some paperbacks, and underground newspapers in the library, and all of a sudden I have young people coming from all over the township saying "Have we got a groovy library now!", and it didn't cost anything to do this much. What's your reaction to this inexpensive -- a mere $50 start -- at relating to the young?

Mr. Johnston: Any time we can get the young people involved, and I think because I'm not sure that the city library can do it, the suburbs have a responsibility to take the lead in developing programs to involve young people with libraries. If the young people want to use the library, then we should try to reach them in a great variety of ways, as perhaps we have never done before. This could be a particular area for innovation.

Dr. Martin: I'll just add one comment. If you want to reach the young people, as individuals and not just as students, you had better bring young people into your planning activities, and you should have some very young people in service and professional roles on your staffs. Here in this room tonight, with the people assembled who are responsible for library service over the north suburban area, I wonder if there is a single person here under thirty years of age and I suspect very few under forty.

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